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China - MFN

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Question for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Warren Christopher
By Senator Pell
Committee on Foreign Relations
November 4, 1993

Question

President Clinton will be meeting this month with Chinese President Jiang. Would you comment on his agenda?

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Answer

The President will emphasize that the U.S. values its relationship with China but that this relationship cannot advance unless there is progress in resolving problems in human rights, trade, and proliferation.

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Question

You have stated that the Clinton Administration is working out a comprehensive relationship with China. As such, a number of cabinet officials have traveled to China. Later this month President Clinton will meet with Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

There is concern that we are not being perceived as serious in our resolve to hold China accountable for the conditions outlined in the Executive Order conditioning future renewal of Most Favored Nation status. In your opinion, do the Chinese believe there is a possibility that MFN will not be renewed next year? How is the Administration conveying to China the importance it places on this issue? What will the President's message to President Jiang be in this regard?

Answer

The purpose of the Administration's policy of engagement is to communicate clearly and forcefully that while we desire a comprehensive relationship with China this is not feasible without progress in human rights and other areas. We believe that the Chinese understand that MFN really is on the line. But just to be sure, this will also be the President's message when he meets Jiang at the APEC leaders meeting.

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Question

One of the conditions in the MFN Executive Order calls for significant progress in preserving Tibet's religious and cultural heritage. Recent U.S. delegations to Tibet report that between 70 and 80 percent of the population of Lhasa is Chinese, certainly a threat to the Tibetan heritage. What is the United States doing to bring about a mutually acceptable agreement between the Chinese and the Dalai Lama on the future of the Tibetan people, before they become a minority on the Tibetan Plateau?

Answer

It is very difficult to obtain an accurate estimate of the percentage of Han Chinese in Lhasa or on the Tibetan Plateau. The "70 or 80 percent" figure, however, is almost certainly too high for Lhasa. Nevertheless, this migration of non-Tibetan Chinese to Tibet is a serious problem and one that we raise regularly with the Chinese. Long-standing U.S. policy is to encourage dialogue between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government to resolve outstanding issues. We will continue to press both the Tibetans and the Chinese government to engage in this dialogue.

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Written by: EAP/RA/TC:HTroutman
EAP/CM:GWilliams

Clearances: EAP:PTomsen
P:WStanton
S/P:LKeene
H:AKirkpatrick
L/EAP:JKovar
C:JFarrar
E:ADerse
EB/TDC/BTA:CBeede

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